



ANNUAL REPORT 2016

"We do not learn from experience... we learn from reflecting on experience."

- John Dewey

So it begins! Not without a year of development, however. In 2016, The founding Board of Directors formed and developed the non-profit organization. By the end of the year, we had reached a significant milestone by filing the IRS form 1023. We were granted 501(c)3 status shortly thereafter and can now accept tax-deductible donations in pursuit of our educational purpose.

Big Muddy also effectively developed the Aspiring Farmer Residency program. Promotion of the new program garnered interest of young growers all the way from California to Vermont. These individuals sent in applications expressing their desire to improve their community building, horticultural, and business leadership skills.

Overall, we didn't grow too fast, nor did we not grow at all. Instead, we grew properly, to the right size that our capacity allowed and taught us. From what we learned this year, we want to improve in these three areas: team building, strategy, and strengthening partnerships. For everyone who has supported us in this amazing journey either with donations, through volunteering, and words of encouragement - the fruits of your support are likely to multiply and ripen in 2017. Thank you!

Sincerely,

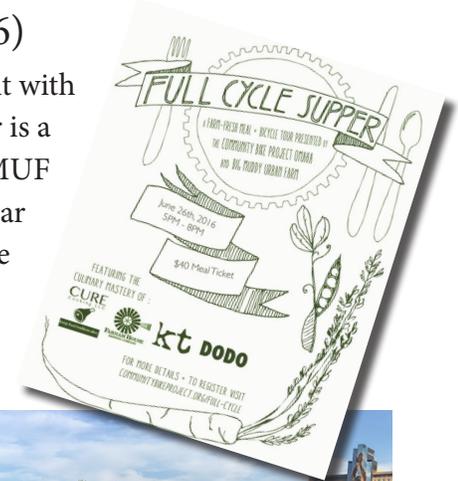
Brent Lubbert
Executive Director
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FUNDRAISING

In 2016, Big Muddy Urban Farm got it's fundraising on! We held three fundraising events throughout the year.

FULL CYCLE SUPPER (June 26th, 2016)

We continued our tremendously fun and successful collaborative fundraising event with Community Bike Shop Omaha, now in it's fourth rendition. The Full Cycle Supper is a progressive three-course, farm-fresh meal where bicyclists tour each of the five BMUF plots, enjoying a unique course, prepared by a local chef, at each plot. Since this year was a fallow year on the farm, we expanded the partnership of this event to include local foods sourced from Big Muddy alum. This shared a larger story of what Big Muddy does: supports aspiring farmers in secure footings to start their own operations.



HARVEST FESTIVAL (October 28th, 2016)

Yates Community Center, located in the Gifford Park Neighborhood, hosted our inaugural Harvest Festival event. The event brought community members together to celebrate the seasons-end with food, live music, contra dancing, and a few words on the direction of Big Muddy. Next year's event will include ten minute presentations from Big Muddy Fellows on what they had learned from their year of growing. We were thrilled to have raised \$386 from the generous support of our community and look forward to celebrating another season in 2017.



FUNDRAISING

SEED RAISING DONOR EVENT (November 13th, 2016)

Another first! We stepped into our formalizing stage of growth by coordinating an event specifically focused on larger donors in our community. Held at the Big Muddy Residency House, it was a beautiful event with animated discussion. Attendance fell short of our goal for the event and this highlighted areas for us to improve on: organizational coordination and communications, internally and externally. These 'failures' were ultimately the success of the event in the end. They helped better define organizational duties between board and staff. It also led to the formation of a fundraising committee with a future fundraising event in the works.



BIG MUDDY SEEDS

Fundraising Seed Packet



Current Financial Goal:
Phase 1 - \$12,500
Current Attainment:

Date:

Aspiring Farmer Residency
lot: 3322 Burt St. Omaha, NE 68131 5 farmers and a diverse community 1 year

Plant by creating a business plan in the winter, sow the plan in the spring, reflective experience after experience deep, with space for quality fellowship. Grows a supported farmer and a safer, more vibrant, healthier community.

Seeds and Farmers that Grow Out of the City

Please see backside of seed packet for donation levels to help us achieve our goals.

IRS FORM 1023 (December 27, 2016)

Big Muddy is now a 501(c)3 tax-exempt non-profit. Our 1023 IRS application to become a 501(c)3 organization was thoroughly revised. The final version clocked in at 216 pages. The application was a larger-than-average because we transitioned from a general partnership into a non-profit organization. The IRS wanted every detailed document of our activities from past, present, to future. Thankfully, we have had good organization in our general partnership years and were able to provide all the necessary information. The process gave us a chance to look back on the past five years and think through what is at the heart of our organization. We delivered our application on December 27th, 2016 and received our determination letter, giving us tax-exempt status, on February 2nd, 2017.

SAVE THE DATE!

Big Muddy Urban Farm Fund-raiser
April 23rd, 2017 // 2-5:30PM // UNMC Sorrell Center
\$50 individual • • \$500 tables • • Sponsorship Packages
visit BigMuddyUrbanFarm.org for more details

GROWING STORIES



A Gracious Caretaker

Elham Abdalla is a Senior at Central High School and is looking forward to pursuing a career in medicine and healthcare. She is a refugee from Genana, Sudan and settled in Omaha in 2014 with her father and two brothers. Her mother past-away a few years before she arrived to the U.S. making Elham fill her mothers role at a young age.

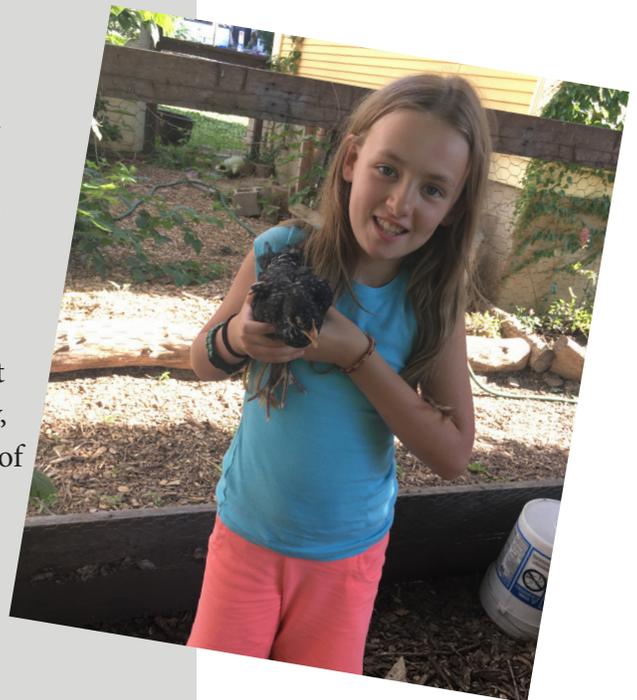
2016 was a fallow year for Big Muddy and we planted most of the plots with cover crop, however, Elham approached us about how she missed gardening with her grandmother in Sudan. She asked to grow a small garden on a couple raised beds. She helped take extremely good care for not only her garden area, but also the other plants growing at the 33rd and California Street site. Growing Okra for her family and friends made her immensely happy because she said it was hard to find a good, fresh source of the beloved crop in Omaha. Her green thumb and diligent care will be helpful to plants and people alike as she continues on with her studies.

Flocking to be an Entrepreneur

Norah Purcell is a 5th grader who lives in the Gifford Park Neighborhood. She is an active gardener at the Gifford Park Youth Garden and during this past growing season, she helped raise the chickens for the Community Garden Coop.

She helped pick out the breeds we would keep at the coop: Cuckoo Maran (pictured) and White Leghorn. She raised twenty birds from day old chicks to three-month old hens at her home in the neighborhood. She cared for the birds daily, while also tracking the costs of raising the flock. At the end of three months, she totaled the costs and sold the flock to Big Muddy.

Norah took ownership of her task and raised a very healthy flock. It was a pleasure doing business with this young entrepreneur in the neighborhood.



GRANTS

SHERWOOD FOUNDATION PROGRAM GRANT



THE
Sherwood
FOUNDATION®

We received a \$25,000 program grant from the Sherwood Foundation with the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association as our fiduciary agent. This grant gave us a strong footing in a formative time of growth and development. It has ensured we become a sustainable

organization that benefits our community for many years to come.

WEITZ FAMILY FOUNDATION LIVING WELL IN OMAHA



2016 welcomed the Weitz Family Foundation to the Big Muddy team. They contacted us during the holiday season to pledge a \$10,000 gift from their Living Well in Omaha grant. Ultimately, the Weitz Family Foundation grant helps

Big Muddy find solutions for inadequate healthy food access, development of an equitable local food system, and a safer, healthier city landscape with many educational opportunities and activities.

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE RESEARCH AND EDUCATION YOUTH EDUCATOR GRANT



We were awarded \$2,000 from our regional Sustainable Agriculture and Education (SARE) office. These funds will be used in connection with our programming at the Gifford Park Youth Garden. Activities include a joint field trip with partnering youth gardens to visit a commercial farm, Aspiring Farmer Resident's development of youth garden lesson plans, and pedagogy on chicken care and food preservation.

2016 Board of Directors

President, Erin Higgins

Extensive experience working with gardening organizations such as Community CROPS in Lincoln and Big Garden as a sustainable agriculture educator.

Treasurer, Rich Callahan

Senior Relationship Banker with Bank of the West who has served on many non-profit boards including Stephen Center and Midtown Business Assoc.

Secretary, Ali Clark

Co-founder of Big Muddy Urban Farm and now currently operating Little Mountain Farm in Honey Creek, Iowa amongst also being Garden Manager at City Sprouts.

Andrew Nauenburg

served on the Big Muddy Board with a business acumen. He departed from the Board in December 2016.

ASPIRING FARMER RESIDENCY

The biggest highlight to 2016 was the successful initiation of our Aspiring Farmer Residency open call application and subsequent selection process.

After receiving sixteen applicants from across the country during a two and a half month open call, we went through a two round selection process. The selection process was performed by a seven member committee that based their decisions only from applicant's performance related information. This ensured an objective and nondiscriminatory selection of six Fellows. The primary reason we attained the applicant pool we were hoping for was our ceaseless work in promoting the concept.

VIDEO PROMOTION



294 shares on Facebook post
with a total view count of **18K** views.

Top audience: Women, 25-34 from Nebraska

OPEN HOUSE

5 open house events with Q + A.
a total of **113** persons attending.



POSTCARDS

3 separate printings of informational postcards
with a total of **625** postcards distributed.

ASPIRING FARMER RESIDENCY PROGRAM

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Aspiring Farmer Residency is an exciting new concept in farmer recruitment, preparation, and support. Through hands-on, decision making experience managing Big Muddy Urban Farm, residents learn the skills necessary to owning and operating their own market farm, from whole farm management, horticulture and agriculture skills, to business management, marketing and distribution.

ELIGIBILITY

- Post-high school, age 18+
- Interest in farming professionally
- Commitment to year-long program
- Ability to work in a team
- All backgrounds are welcome

APPLICATIONS DUE
October 1st, 2016

RESIDENCY PROGRAM DATES
January 1st - December 9th, 2017

BIG MUDDY URBAN FARM

HOW IT WORKS

- LIVE**
Co-house and learn with fellows in shared residency house
- GROW**
Grow crops and manage a whole farm plan
- LEARN**
Hands-on experience managing a market farm

ASPIRING FARMER RESIDENCY



From Left to right: Brent Lubbert, Executive Director; and 2017 Residents: Kia Beason, Tyrome Williams, Taylor Jespersen, Cadence Hernandez, Emily Hefeli, Terry Salem.

Kia Beason // Lincoln, NE - Kia has been working at Lincoln's food coop, Open Harvest, for many years and has learned much from the distribution side of local food. She is looking forward to understanding the producer side of local food systems and is interested in apothecary and herbalism.

Tyrome Williams // Omaha, NE - Tyrome works with the after school program Building Dreams. He will be exploring aquaponics systems and how they relate in terms of efficiencies to direct sow methods of cultivating food during his residency.

Taylor Jespersen // Hemingford, NE - Taylor recently returned to Nebraska after studying sustainable agriculture in an eight-month training course at the University of Vermont. He is excited about learning the business creation process for future endeavors in starting a farm.

Cadence Hernandez // Omaha, NE - Cadence is currently studying horticulture at Metropolitan Community College. She wants to learn what it takes to physically, mentally, and financially to grow food and is also looking to do bee keeping on the farm.

Emily Hefeli // Omaha, NE - Emily will be taking courses at UNO in Spanish language and gender studies while in residence. She is interested in the role food has in building and supporting community.

Terry Salem // Omaha, NE - Terry is very passionate about growing food and how it relates to living a healthier, happier life. He wants to gain as much knowledge of growing food so he can share what he knows with many young men and women in our community.

2016 APPLICATION CHARACTERISTICS

<u>AGE</u>	20-22	23-25	26-28	29-31		
	(3) 18.7%	(9) 56.3%	(3) 18.7%	(1) 6.3%		
<u>RACE</u>						
Hispanic/Latino	White	Black/African-American				
(1) 6.3%	(13) 81%	(2) 12.7%				
<u>SEX</u>	Female	Male	Other			
	(9) 56.2%	(6) 37.5%	(1) 6.3%			
<u>STATE ORIGIN</u>	Nebraska	KS	VT	IA	PA	CO
	(11) 87.5%	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

This year required a significant amount of promotion because we stepped into new programming with our Aspiring Farmer Residency. We also highlighted our past challenges and successes. We expanded our audience, even speaking at a national conference.

Neighborhoods U.S.A. Conference

Memphis, TN - 5/26/16

Presentation: *Grow in Gifford Park*

IN the Neighborhood Conference

Omaha, NE - 10/1/16

Co-Keynote: *The Gifford Park Story*

UNL Architecture Students

Lincoln, NE - 9/12 + 9/21/16

Guest Speaker: 1) *United States Green Building Council Student Org; Architecture Studios*

Breaking New Ground

Big Muddy Residence - 7/21/16

Announcement: *AFR open call*

Harvest Festival

Yates Community Center - 10/29/16

Ask: *Fundraising Appeal*



Announcing open call for Aspiring Farmer Residency applications at Breaking New Ground event. Photo: Mekenzie Wild

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

3

TV Spotlights

1. PBS - 2/26/16
Episode 10 of The Victory Garden show
2. KETV - 9/17/16
Big Muddy Offers Agricultural Opportunity with New Program
3. WOWT - 12/21/16
Urban Farm Project Heading for Midtown

3

Print News Stories

1. NPR - 3/7/16
Urban Farms Fuel Idealism. Profits? Not So Much
2. Omaha World Herald - 3/28/16
A Sprouting Groups Fertile Soil
3. Des Moines Register - 3/29/16
Millennials put down roots on urban farms

2

Awards

1. James Beard Foundation
Good Food Organization 2016
2. Nonprofit Association of the Midlands
Nonprofit Executive Institute - Class 11



The Nonprofit Executive Institute at Nonprofit Association of the Midlands.

GIFFORD PARK YOUTH GARDEN

This was our **5th** year of providing programming support for the Gifford Park Youth Garden.

The Youth Garden provided gardening education to **60** participants during its 16-week program.



Youth Gardeners use a broadfork to cultivate Big Muddy plot.



Demonstration of how to make homemade sauce for seasons-end pizza party incorporating ingredients that the youth had grown.

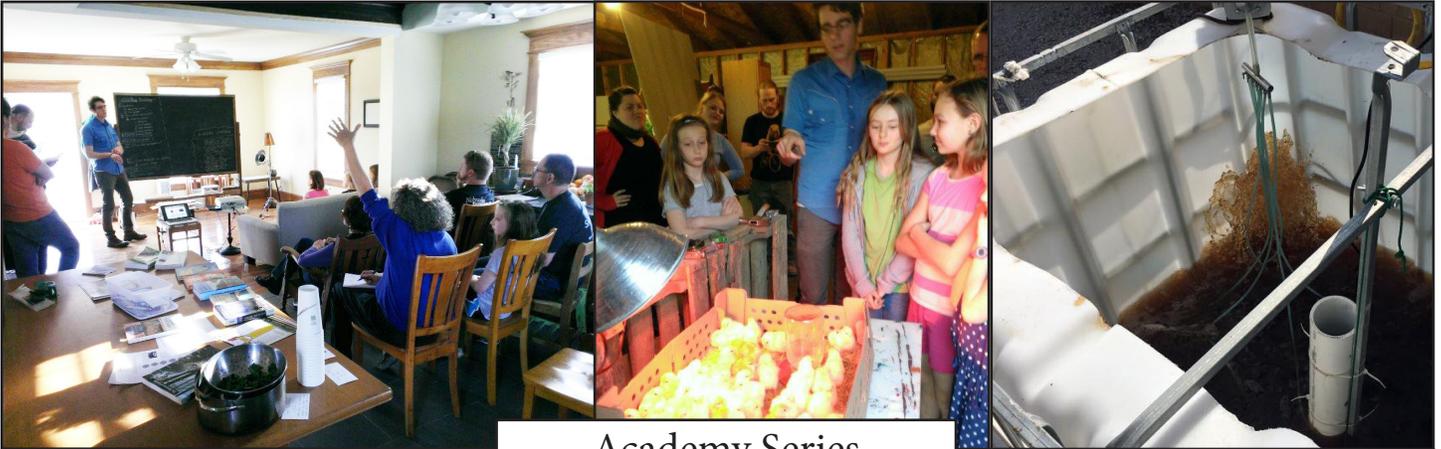
VOLUNTEERS

Farm activities never cease, even if you take a fallow year. This year we had over **20** opportunities for volunteers to get their hands dirty, be active in their community, and meet new neighbors and friends. Activities included planting cover crop, planting some vegetable crops, weed management, and infrastructure maintenance. Additionally:

- A 14 member crew from Farm Credit Services of America helped restore our 33rd and Webster Chicken Coop and apply soil amendments to a nearby field. They very generously donated \$1,000 in addition to volunteering.
- The Creighton Mens and Womans Cross Country team helped plant cover crops in the high tunnel.
- Produce grown this year was donated to refugee families and Table Grace Cafe.
- Our volunteer group, The Big Muddy Stewards, has **74 members** as a Facebook group, ready for any volunteer opportunities that arise.



PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES



Academy Series

The Academy Series was new this year to Big Muddy programming.

The Academy Series was five sessions of in-depth, hands-on training on certain subjects. We focused on Urban Chicken Keeping and Soil Health for the first year.

The Chicken Academy was well attended with 16 participants interested in the whole process of sourcing chickens to building a coop to proper care.

Local Food Coordinating Group

Big Muddy attended many Local Food Coordinating meetings.

This group is comprised of food organizations and farmers in the region. The group is organized to achieve Heartland 2050's outcome 6.5 - "By 2050, the region has a sustainable system of local agriculture that provides food to the region".



Tour De Garden

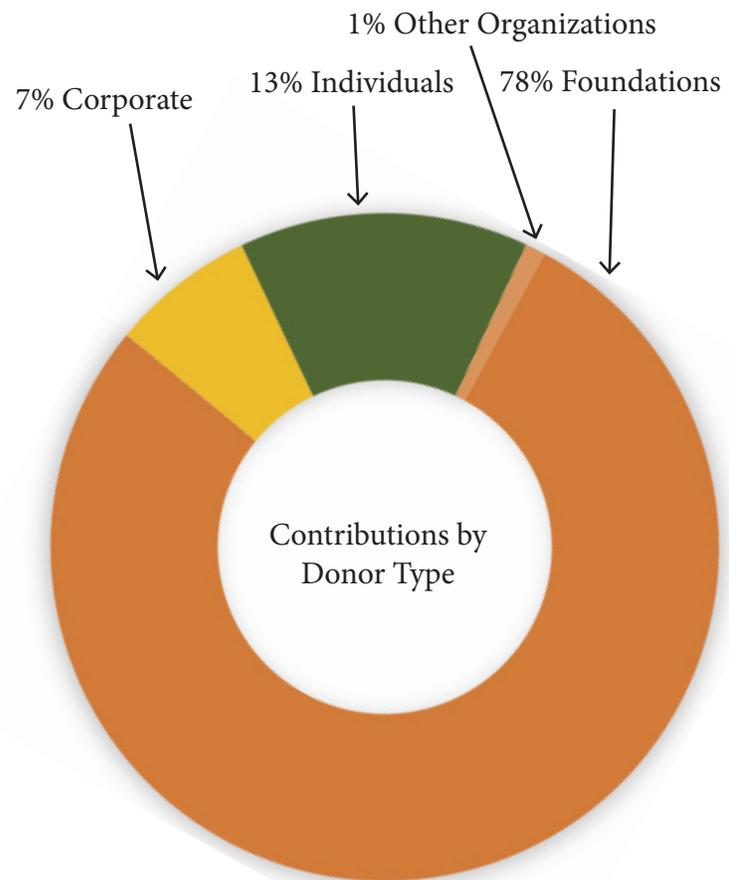
Big Muddy was amazed by the turn out of cyclists for Tour De Garden. Nearly 100 cyclists stopped by to tour the residency house in its renovation glory.

We were one of many stops in the tour that joins physical activity with gardening culture to ensure Omaha stays a healthy and vibrant community.

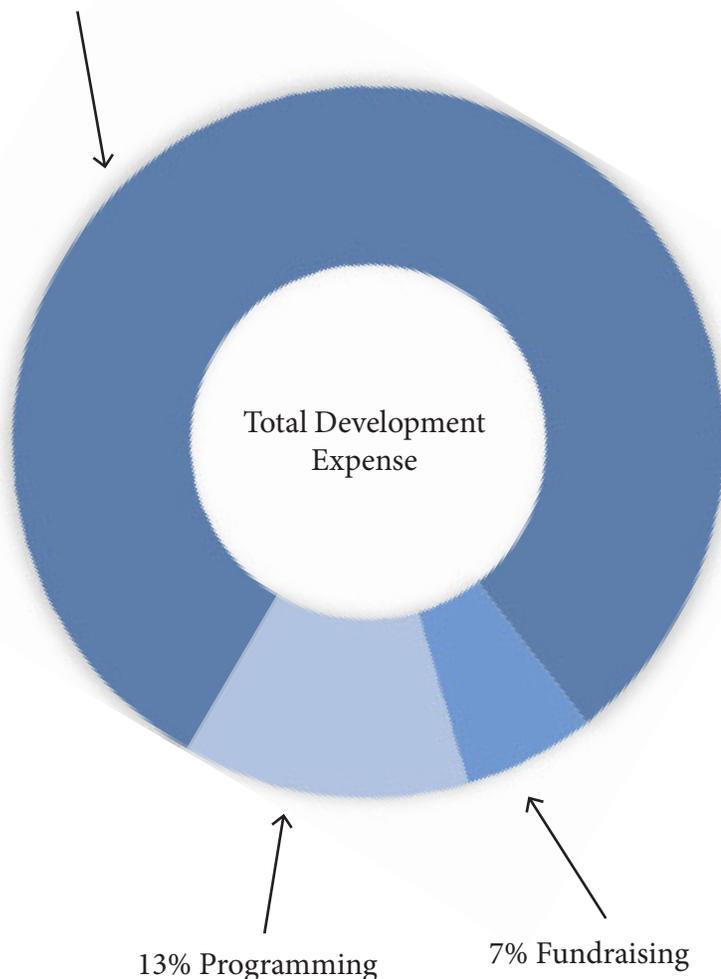


FINANCIAL REPORT

The financials for the first year of our non-profit entity show it was a development year. We used a majority of funds to build the residency recruitment process and curriculum. Funds helped with development of our program and came primarily from the generous support of a Sherwood Foundation grant. In the next fiscal year we hope to add 5% to individual contributions and 2% to corporate giving. Our expenses percentages should change to more programming because our residency program will be out of development and in full swing for 2017. In total, we achieved a lot for spending \$10,153, which we attribute to strong partnerships and fiscal responsibility.



80% Development & Administration



Support & Revenue	2016
Contributions	\$2,787
Foundation Grants	\$10,472
Other Income	\$100
Total Support & Revenue	\$13,360

Expenses	
Development & Administration	\$8,141
Fundraising	\$659
Program	\$1,353
Total Expenses	\$10,153

Assets & Liabilities	
Total Assets	\$35,547
Total Liabilities	\$0

SPECIAL THANKS

Special Thanks to our supporters and partners that make it all possible!

Aerni Family	Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition	Omaha 360
Maranda Allbritten	The Grey Plume	Paul & Audrey Paulman
Anonymous	Ellana Haakenstad	Eliza Perry
Kate Anderson	Jean Hammack	Adrian Petrescu
Marie Helen Andre	Mary Hanten	Powers Family
Brad Ashford	Erin Higgins	Purcell Family
Jeff Becker	Patti Higgins	Refugee Empowerment Center
Bernt Family	Craig Howell	Paige Reitz
Big garden	Hutton Family	Sandra Renner
Christina Bloomquist-Korth	Martin Janousek	Root Farm Chicken Marm Jug Band
Stephanie Brandt	Chris Jeram	Julia Ross
Amy Brown	Ashley Jernigan	Rossman Family
Mike Caban	Eleanor Johnson	Adam Sagert
Leah Carpenter	Justin Jones	Sam Sendra-Cook
Caitie Caughey	Joslyn Castle	Sherwood Foundation
Center for Rural Affairs	Garrett Kenyan	Teresa Smith
City Sprouts	Kitchen Table	South Omaha Neighborhood Assoc
Jessica Clark	James & Regina Kyler	Sperry Family
Chris Combs	Legal Aid of Nebraska	Darby Springs
Community Crops	James Lemieux	Stanley Family
Creighton University	Scott Lewis Jr.	Jen Stasny
Francisco Jimenez Crisostomo	Kristin Longacre	Katie Stern
Matt Cronin	Lubbert Family	Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education
Maggie Cunningham	Connor Magnuson	Mekenzie Sutton
Anna Deal	Tyler Magnuson	Amy Swoboda
Drew Dietle	Susan Mayberger	Table Grace Cafe
Edible Omaha	Anna Mclellan	Jaimee Trobough
Dan Egan	Metro Area Planning Agency	Terry Toxel
Olivia Egan	Metropolitan Community College	Andy Waltke
Farm Credit Services of America	Danelle Meyer	WeCompost
Farm Table Delivery	Nathan Morgan	Weitz Family
Chris Foster	Cristina Murphy	Johnie Theodore Wiedenman
Jacqueline Foster	Nauenburg Family	Brad Wissmueller
Aaron French	Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture	Shelly Witters
Nancy Gaarder	Nebraska Extension	Woman, Food, and Agriculture Network
Gene Gage	Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society	
Gifford Park Neighborhood Assoc	No More Empty Pots	
Ernie Goss	North Omaha Neighborhood Assoc	
Goswami Family		
Green Acres		